

REPORT ON GREAT GULL ISLAND: SUMMER, 1970

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The summer of 1969 (*Kingbird* XX(4):168; 1970) indicated that Great Gull Island, Suffolk County, N.Y. is an excellent location for the detection of bird movements during the summer months and for unusual migrants. The summer of 1970 confirmed this as the following list indicates. The birds noted are either unusual because of the time of year or because they are out of place on a small, treeless island.

American Sparrow Hawk: June 30; July 9; July 25.

Purple Sandpiper: This species lingered in decreasing numbers until June 11 when the last one was seen. This is not a summer record, but instead represents a spring migration extreme. On July 16, Alan Poole observed 3 feeding on the South Beach of the island (Poole, in prep.) The birds were photographed by the author. This is the fourth July record for the New York City area and the second for Great Gull Island (Bull, *Birds of the New York City Area*, Harper and Row, 1964).

Great Crested Flycatcher: June 22-23; July 3. It is unlikely that the birds are breeders as the island is treeless.

Traill's Flycatcher: June 20; July 3. Bull believes that some individuals of this species migrate early as indicated by banding done by Lanyon and Gill. The Great Gull Island birds may be extreme examples of this or summer vagrants.

Cliff Swallow: May 30; June 29, identified by Roger Pasquier. This species is listed by Bull as "scarce here it does not breed, particularly along the coast." The last known nesting on Long Island was in 1924. The birds may be vagrants, or they may have come from a colony that is presently unknown, perhaps Gardiner's Island, but more probably a ruined coastal defense site located on a small island three miles SW of Great Gull. Hopefully we will be able to investigate this summer.

Swainson's Thrush: 2 on June 16. 1 netted on July 3. Bull mentions no previous July records for the area. As the species breeds in the Berkshires (NH) and higher altitudes generally, its presence in early July is unexplainable on an island with a maximum elevation of 35 feet.

White-Eyed Vireo: July 2.

Louisiana Waterthrush: August 25. Bull lists it as "very rare along the coast." He believes that it migrates through interior river valleys and avoids the beaches, especially during the Fall. This bird was netted after a day of precipitation, with a heavy fog beginning.

Mourning Warbler: June 11, male; generally rare on the eastern end of Long Island, this is one of the latest records for the New York city area.

Summer Tanager: June 5-6, a second year male in changing plumage.

None of the summer records mentioned could have bred on the island. It is too small for most species to escape detection, and its treeless, exposed terrain inhabited by 5,000 terns similarly rules out many of the birds as possible breeders.

The summer visitants and most of the migrants, Louisiana Waterthrush excepted, do not seem to have been the result of bad weather or high winds. Before the first week in July when the Swainson's Thrush, Great Crested Flycatcher, Traill's Flycatcher, White Eyed Vireo all occurred, there had been no significantly bad weather for the preceding two weeks.

These results seem to back up the conclusions of my previous paper: that there is a large and generally unidentified population of non-breeding birds which has, in most areas, not been distinguished from the resident, breeding population.

My thanks to all who helped both with the field work and the preparation of this paper.

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THE NORTH AMERICAN NEST RECORD CARD PROGRAM

The North American Nest Record Card Program conducted by the Laboratory of Ornithology at Cornell now receives over 20,000 records annually from over 800 contributors. Nearly 100 regional centers throughout the continent help coordinate the distribution and collection of cards. The Program, which was begun by the Laboratory in 1965 and is now under the directorship of Dr. David B. Peakall, collects, processes and stores on computer tapes and memory discs information on the nesting biology of birds. Several studies, based on data from the Program, have been completed. Of particular interest is a recent paper by Dr. Peakall "The Eastern Bluebird: Its Breeding Season, Clutch Size, and Nesting Success." (*The Living Bird*, 9: 239-256, 1970). A limited number of reprints of this paper are available from the Laboratory.

The Program seeks information on nesting data on all species of birds, both historical and current. At the present time, however, it is engaged in a study of the geographical variation of the clutch-size of the Robin, Barn Swallow and Eastern Phoebe and is, therefore, particularly anxious to receive nesting information on these three species.

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